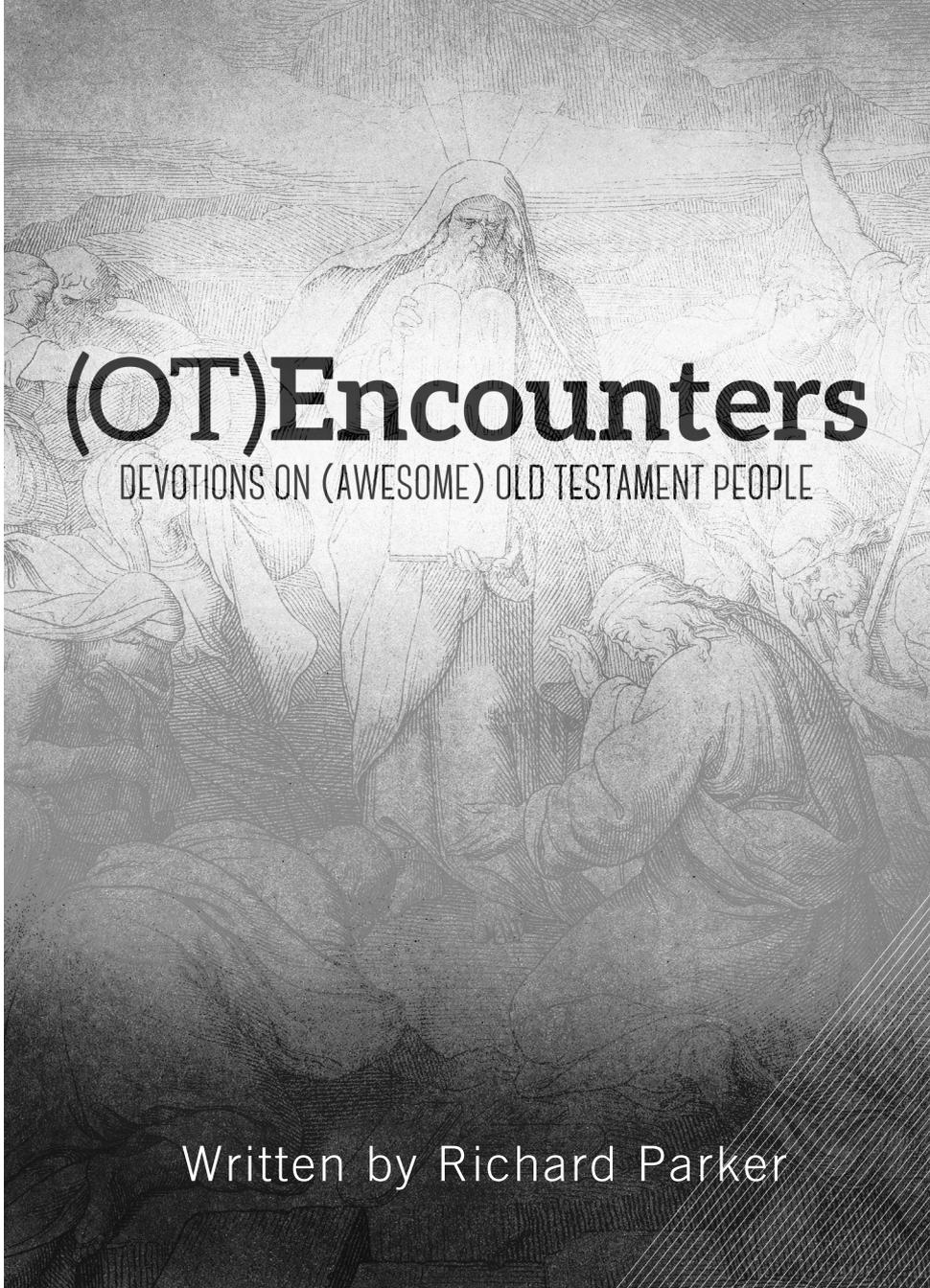


This is a preview of (OT) Encounters.

It contains a few samples of the different daily devotions teenagers will find in the book.

If you have any questions about this sample, or about ordering (OT) Encounters, or the companion book, (NT) Encounters, please give us a call (888.969.6360) or email us (customercare@youthministry360.com). We're happy to help however we can.



(OT) Encounters

DEVOTIONS ON (AWESOME) OLD TESTAMENT PEOPLE

Written by Richard Parker

Week 1 // Day 2 // ABRAHAM

KEY TRUTH: A Loss Can Actually Be A Gain

What if God called you to do something that required you to leave everything behind to follow Him?

Read Genesis 12:1-3. Abraham was a very rich man who had a very comfortable life. He had his relatives close by, he lived in the area he grew up in, and his life was pretty well set. Then God called him to leave it all behind to go to an unknown land with only the promise that God would bless him greatly. Sounds pretty scary to me. But think about doing that very thing 5,000 years ago with no phones, no Internet, and no GPS devices! There would be literally nothing connecting Abraham to his former life.

God was calling Abraham to follow Him by faith. Blind faith.

The cool thing is that Abraham did what God asked him to do. There were some ups and downs throughout his journey, for sure. But he was faithful and God blessed him with more than he could have ever imagined. Abraham didn't look behind at what he was leaving, but rather looked ahead at living a life of trusting and being obedient to God.

When God calls you to a task or maybe even to a whole new way of living, is your first response to look at what you have to give up in order to obey Him? Abraham discovered that a future lived in faith would be nothing short of amazing, regardless of the cost.

Follow the directions below to start thinking about the things you've lost in life that make following Jesus easier.

In the space below, write one thing you've had to give up because of your relationship with Christ.

Describe what it felt like to give this thing up.

How did giving this up actually help you follow Jesus more closely?

Take a moment to talk to God. Thank Him for loving you enough to help you weed out those things that keep you from following after Him.

Week 2 // Day 4 // RAHAB

KEY TRUTH: Be Willing To Believe

Joshua, the leader of the Israelites, was preparing to lead the people to defeat the fortified city of Jericho, and to finally enter the Promised Land. He sent two men ahead to scout out the situation. When their presence was made known to the king of Jericho, a prostitute by the name of Rahab hid the men and saved their lives. In turn, she asked them to spare her life and the lives of her family members when they destroyed the city, which they did.

Read Rahab's story in Joshua chapter 2. Then, flip over to Matthew 1:5. What do you see there? In the genealogy of Jesus, we find Rahab. How amazing is that?! Through the grace of God, Rahab, who at one time was a prostitute and an enemy of God, is in the earthly lineage of Jesus. She acted on her faith, saving the Israelites. And though we don't know all the details, she evidently joined the Israelites, identifying with them as her people.

Rahab's faith saved her. But the interesting thing is how she came to faith.

She heard of God's fame through stories, passed along by people who had also heard of God's amazing works. As a Christ-follower, you have an amazing opportunity to tell the world what God does in your life, and in the lives of others. Don't waste the opportunity. It could mean life or death for someone you know, just like it did for Rahab.

God's history of interacting in your life is a powerful tool for leading others to having a relationship with Him. Look at the timeline below. Think about all the times God has somehow interacted in your life. Write a description below the line and a date above it. The first one has been started for you.



Week 3 // Day 1 // SAMSON

KEY TRUTH: Let God Be God

During the years before Israel had a king, people known as judges ruled and led the people. One of the most interesting of the judges was a man by the name of Samson. Now, you probably know that Samson was very strong and probably very handsome. We also know through Scripture that he did not work well with others.

Read Judges 15:14-15. Here we see Samson doing what he did often: using his brute strength to get himself out of trouble he probably didn't have to be in to begin with. The Samson you heard of as a child might have seemed like a hero. But when you take a real look at his life, he was actually a pretty flawed character. He broke the vows he had taken as a Nazirite, he was manipulative, and dishonest.

But maybe his greatest flaw was his reliance on his own greatness instead of on the power of God. This led to his downfall and eventually his death.

God may have blessed you with a talent or some unique ability. As easy as it is to put your faith in those qualities to get through life, what God really wants is for you to put your complete trust and faith in Him. Be thankful for what God has blessed you with and dedicate your life to using those things for His glory.

Today, think about this one thing: How does God want to use your interests and talents to change the world **for His glory?**

Week 1 // Day 4 // JOB

KEY TRUTH: God Is At His Best When Life Is At Its Worst

It's easy to talk about a great and loving God when things are going good. But what about when things are going bad?

What good things can come out of a relationship with God in the tough times of life?

Job was a man who loved God and served him. Then all of a sudden his life turned upside down. He lost his livestock and his farmhands, his children died in a tornado, and his health went bad when he broke out with boils from head to foot. Job lost almost everything. But despite the urging of his wife to curse God and die, and even though his friends were convinced he must have done some great evil thing to offend God, Job remained faithful.

Read Job 42:3-5. This exchange comes after Job had questioned God. God reminded Job in a powerful way how truly sovereign He is. Job's remarks here show that, in the end, Job came to know God more deeply through the adversity he had experienced. Eventually God restored everything Job lost and the Bible says the second part of his life was even better than the first.

Job would never forget what happened to him earlier in his life. Job learned what we too must come to see: it's in some of the most difficult times of life that we experience God in the most amazing ways.

Read through the following questions. Consider writing your answers in this book, or in a journal, or note-taking app. If you don't like to write, simply take the time to think about them.

- Job was a good and righteous man but bad stuff happened to him. How do you make sense of the idea that bad things happen to good people?
- Job had the opportunity to ask God a lot of questions about what happened to him. Do you think it is okay to question God?
- If you were standing in front of God, what questions would you ask Him?
- Have you ever found yourself being upset with God when things don't go your way? Maybe when that happens your first response could be, "God, help me to know you better through this situation."